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Title: Need to accord the status of a classical language to Kannada.

SHRI MANJUNATH KUNNUR (DHARWAD SOUTH) : Thank you Sir, I am very much greatful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak in Kannada. For the last three years people of Karnataka have been taking part in Rail Roko, Road Roko demonstrations etc. demanding recognition of Kannada as a "Classical language".

Sir, Karnataka is one of the four southern states. Kannada is its language. It has a history of more than 2000 years. The Government of India has already accorded classical status to Tamil language. Kannada like Tamil is also one of the Dravidian languages. It has all the features to get a classical status. Through you I would like to bring these features of Kannada to the notice of the Union Government.

Sir, over 25,000 inscriptions of Kannada language have been found in Maharastra, Andhra Pradhesh, Tamil Nadu. 1st Kannada inscription 'Halmidi has been recorded during 450 A.D and the ancient book Kavirajamarga was written in 850 A.D.

10th century poets like Pampa, Ranna, Janna, Ponna and 12th century Vachanakara's like Jagajyoti-Basaveshwara, Akkamahadevi, Allama Prabhu have contributed a lot to enrich Kannada language and literature. In modern times, Kannada language has bagged seven Jnanapeeth Awards the highest award for literature in the country. Kuvempu, D.R.Bendre, Shivaram Karant, Masti Venkatesh Iyengar, V. K. Gokak, U. R. Anantamurty and Girish Karnad are the awardees. Dr. D.Javaregowda, former vice Chancellor of Mysore University, poet, literateur of Kannada language was on hunger strike (unto death) demanding classical status for Kannada language. Original in Kannada.

* English Translation of the Speech originally delivered in Kannada.

Sir, I breath in Kannada, it is in my blood. Hence, I urge upon the Government of India to take immediate steps to accord classical status to Kannada language without further delay. Otherwise it would affect the peace, law and order of the state.